(b) As per the guidelines issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on September 25,2001, agents/ distributors of all mutual funds are expected to pass the certification programme of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) by March 31, 2003. With effect from November, 1, 2001, SEBI made it mandatory for all mutual funds to appoint agents/distributors who have obtained certification from AMFI. Existing agents/distributors are expected to pass the certification programme by March 31, 2003.

The programme is organised by AMFI through the National Stock Exhange of India Ltd. and the UTI Institute of Capital markets. Senior Citizens above the age of 60 and with two years of experience of selling mutual funds schemes have been exempted from passing the certification tests. Instead they have to attend a mutual fund training programme.

In case of non-compliance of the certification and registration requirements the mutual funds which have empanelled these agents/ distributors may suspend further business and pay-out of commissions till there is full compliance with these requirements.

(c) SEBI has intimated that no such proposal is under consideration.

Applications pending for fixation of brand rates

2755. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is huge backlog of applications pending in the Department for fixation of brand rates for duty draw back;

(b) if so, how many such applications are pending for more than 6/ 12 months and more than a year respectively;

(c) what is the reason for this delay;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the officials concerned are not clearing the case expeditiously; and

(e) if so, the remedial action taken by the Department?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No. Sir.

(b) to (e) On an average, Department of Revenue receives approximately 5000 applications per year for fixation of Brand Rate and there are only 115 and 35 Brand Rate applications pending over 1 year and 6 months respectively. These applications were filed under Normal or Simplified Schemes of Brand Rate. Under Normal Scheme, Brand Rate applications are processed after receipt of Verification Report from jurisdictional Central Excise Commissionerate. However, under both these Schemes, the applicant is required to submit application alongwith details of duty paying documents and evidence about utilisation of inputs in the export product alongwith DBK statements in the prescribed proforma. These applications are pending for want of Verification Report and on account of incomplete data. In order to expedite the issuance of Brand Rate letters, Government has announced a new Simplified Scheme of brand rate from 01.09.2002 which will ensure disposal of all complete applications in time bound manner.

Appointment of dependants of customs employees

2756. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of wards of deceased employees of the Department of Customs of Rajkot Region, (including Kandla) whose appointments on compassionate grounds are pending;

(b) by when these wards are likely to be given employment; and

(c) the steps taken to expedite their appointments in view of their pathetic conditions'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) Sir, in the Department of Customs of Rajkot (including Kandla), 26 applications are pending for appointment on compassionate grounds. Out of these 26 cases, 12 cases have been placed on the waiting list for compassionate appointment on the basis of the recommendations of a committee appointed for this purpose in accordance with the Revised Consolidated instructions issued in 1998 for the Scheme for Compassionate Appointment under the Central Government. 14 cases are pending for consideration by the Committee.